



# NeighborNet

**WINTER 2009**

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**National Night Out Award**

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**In The Cold**

**Updated CSO Beat Map**

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## **WHERE DID MY CAR GO?**

### **WARNING**

As the colder weather approaches many people may be tempted to leave their vehicle warming up in their driveway in order to warm the interior of their car and to help in removing snow and ice from the windows. Unfortunately, the West Valley City Police Department receives many calls every year from citizens whose vehicles were stolen under just these circumstances. In 2007, seventy-three vehicles were stolen while they were left running in front of a home or in a driveway.

Be aware that some insurance companies will not cover the loss of your stolen car if the car was left running unattended when it was stolen.

When you are tempted to start your vehicle and leave it to warm up while you finish getting ready for work or school, outside gas stations, cash machines and local stores, remember how inconvenient it will be when you step outside and your car is missing. Don't leave your engine running, even if you'll only be gone for a matter of seconds - a thief only needs a few seconds to pounce.

The West Valley City Police Department appreciates your help in keeping you and your property safe throughout the year. Report ALL suspicious behavior to the West Valley City Police Department immediately.

**NON-EMERGENCY 840-4000**

**EMERGENCY 9 1 1**



## NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES HAS MOVED!

The Public Relations & Neighborhood Services Office has moved to new offices located on the second floor of City Hall in Suite 230. Mailing address, phone numbers, and email addresses will remain the same.

## NATIONAL NIGHT OUT 2009 AWARD

As many of you know, for the past 26 years West Valley City residents have participated in the National Association of Town Watch's National Night Out Against Crime. 2009 was an amazing year with hugely successful events in every corner of the City. Once again, your efforts have been recognized on the National level! This week the National Association of Town Watch announced their 2009 national awards. West Valley City was ranked 18th in the National for communities with populations between 100,000 – 299,000. This is the sixth consecutive year your efforts have been recognized Nationally.

### CONGRATULATIONS! Job well done.

A reception with City Council and the organizers of the more than 35 events has been planned for:

**Tuesday, January 18  
5:30-6:30 pm  
West Valley City Hall  
Lobby  
3600 South  
Constitution Boulevard**

Please mark your calendars and plan to attend. A short program will begin at 5:45 and individual groups will receive certificates from the City Council. You are also invited to attend the City Council meeting immediately following the reception where City Council will be presented with the award from the National Association of Town Watch.

Invitations will be sent out the first part of January. Once again, THANK YOU for your service in the community. Your efforts make a HUGE difference. Keep up the good work!







## IN THE COLD by Officer Longman, CSO Beat 1

The cold weather is now upon us and brings with it the much anticipated holiday season. At this time of year we see great acts of kindness as many people will dedicate their time and money to help others in need. There is no doubt that these selfless acts of caring, foster a heightened sense of pride and caring in our community.

While the vast majority of people are busy working through this hectic time of year to put all of the pieces of an enjoyable season together; there is always that element that is willing to bring a halt to the festivities. Unfortunately our community is not immune to these seemingly heartless Grinches that are just waiting for the opportunity.

When was the last time that you had the opportunity to get something for nothing? We all work hard for the property that we own and yet so often we give these thieving Grinches the OPPORTUNITY to have something of ours, for nothing. It is no secret that most vehicle burglaries are crimes of opportunity. As the shopping season begins and you are out looking for bargains, the Grinches will also be busy looking to ruin your holiday spirit. It only takes seconds for a thief to smash a car window and grab the bag containing that perfect gift that you had put so much thought and effort into getting for your loved one. Leaving you with a pit in your stomach and a vehicle to repair, not to mention a gift that is now gone. Here are a few suggestions that may make your vehicle less appealing and hopefully prevent you from being left in the cold.

### AUTO-BURGLARY PREVENTION TIPS...

**Don't leave valuables in your car.** That sounds like "common sense", but drivers/passengers do leave items of value in plain view every day. If you leave valuable items visible in your car, your car is automatically a target.

If you must leave valuable items in your car while out and about, place items out of sight before reaching your destination or move them inconspicuously. This includes packages, backpacks, gym bags, GPS units, MP3 players, and so forth. Someone may be watching when you put items under a seat or throw something over them. An opportunistic thief is on the lookout for trunk-packing, and can break into your car the minute you're out of sight.

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**EMERGENCY 9 1 1**

[www.wvc-ut.gov/cso](http://www.wvc-ut.gov/cso)



If you can't take them with you, at least lock the items in your glove compartment (if capable of locking and large enough) or your trunk (if you have one).

One reason SUVs and pickups are common auto-burglary targets is because they don't have a "trunk" to hold valuables—the driver/passenger generally just "hides" their valuables "out of sight". The thieves know this, and do check glove compartments, behind seats, and under seats. It only takes a few seconds to check all the "usual" hiding places.

Unobtrusively locking everything valuable "in the trunk" (if you have one) may be difficult when you're combining errands at multiple destinations. Certainly avoid leaving packages or shopping bags visible in your car — lock them in the trunk out of sight if you have to leave packages in your car unattended. Plan your shopping/errands so that you don't load your trunk until you are ready to drive to another destination; never open a trunk, fill it full of valuables, close it, and then just walk away.

Taking advantage of free home delivery offered by many merchants is one way to protect your purchases while making your shopping far more enjoyable.

Keep your car in good operating condition and always have plenty of gas to get "there and back" (it costs no more to keep the top quarter of the tank filled than to keep the bottom quarter-tank filled!); you don't want to have to leave your car (and valuable contents) sitting along the side of the road if that can be avoided.

Once home, unload your valuables immediately. Do not store valuables in your car any longer than necessary, and certainly never overnight.

If your trunk can be opened from inside your car without a key, lock this feature when you are not in your car or have it disabled, if possible.

**Leave no trace.** Don't leave any "sign" that there might be valuables "out of sight" in your vehicle, such as docking stations or connector cables. Leave nothing in "plain sight" that might make your vehicle worth "investigating" by a thief; not even loose coins or a CD.

Just leaving an empty docking station in plain sight, even if you've taken the high dollar component with you, may end up costing you hundreds of dollars to replace a broken window because the thief wanted to check your car for "hidden" valuables. Very few auto break-ins are "random" — the thieves see "something" in plain sight that's valuable, or hints of possible hidden valuables.

If you have an after-market stereo/CD-player with a removable faceplate, remove it. Without the faceplate, the unit is less attractive/useful to many thieves, and harder to "fence". If the unit can be pulled, pull it! Take it with you. Just covering a valuable radio (or ANY valuables in your car) with something (like a blanket or towel) to hide it will probably only draw thieves' attention.

**Try to park in busy, well-lighted areas.** Try to park in well-traveled areas. Large anonymous lots are hit by thieves much more often than parking immediately adjacent to residential housing or other occupied buildings. Try to choose a well-lighted, visible, parking spot where there is lots of vehicular and pedestrian movement when possible. Auto-burglars prefer breaking into cars where they will not be observed or attract notice, and choose their targets accordingly.

**Lock ALL your vehicle's doors** even if you plan to be gone for only a brief time. Every year, we have items stolen from unlocked vehicles where the owner was only going to be gone "just for a second". It only takes seconds to steal your stuff! It's not at all uncommon for thieves to walk down a row of parked vehicles and check vehicle doors to see if they are unlocked. Don't leave any window open or even cracked open, including vent/wing windows and sunroofs.

**Set any alarm or anti-theft device.** If you have one, use it! Many people believe that car-alarms no longer make a difference, but they can be an effective deterrent to an auto-burglar, who most often chooses the easiest target. If they have two cars to choose from, one with an alarm and one without, they will likely burglarize the one without (unless you've left out valuables just too good to ignore!)

Locking your car and setting your alarm is just part of the solution. Even if locked and alarmed, if you leave valuables (or the hint of valuables) in plain sight, a thief may target your car, even knowing it's locked and alarmed. But, without a clear prize in sight, a locked/alarmed car will likely be bypassed for an easier "target of opportunity".

Don't think your dark tinted windows will hide your valuables. Thieves often use flashlights to see through tint, and after-market tint is handy to keep all the broken glass in one "sheet" when they break out your window (and toss the broken window into your back seat or passenger seat to hide the evidence of the break-in from passersby).







Don't use "hide-a-keys". Thieves know the best places to hide those. But remember, just "locking" isn't enough. Keep your car OFF the target list of the thieves by keeping all hints of valuables totally out of sight. If they see something tempting, they certainly can break in.

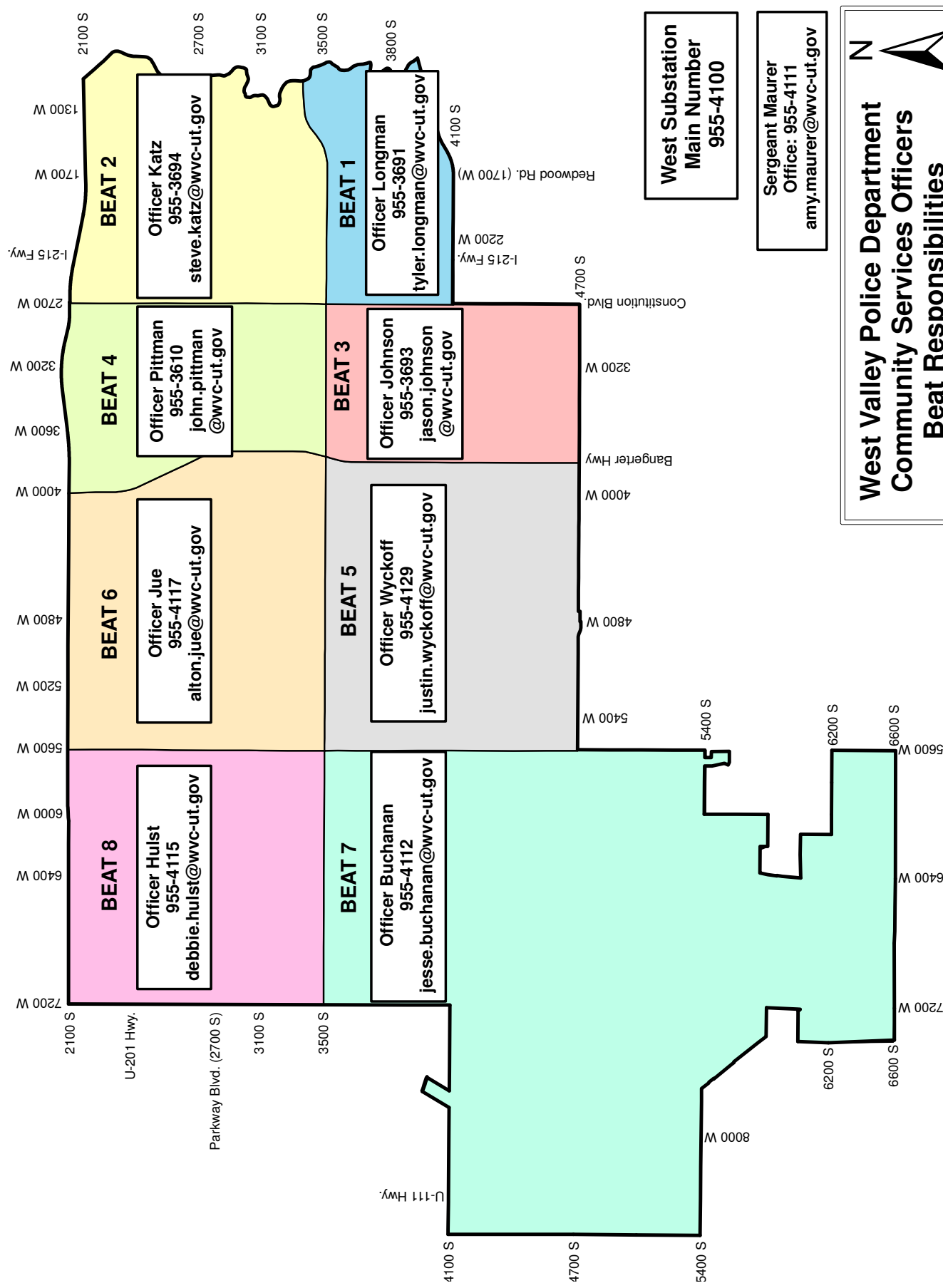
### **What Items are Most Commonly Stolen from Vehicles?**

- Backpacks, gym bags, briefcases, day-planners
- Cash/coins, checkbooks and credit/debit cards
- Wallets and purses (even when hidden under a seat or in an unlocked glove compartment)
- Laptop computers, iPods and MP3 players, (and docking stations)
- Cell phones (and chargers)
- Portable GPS navigation systems
- Stereo/CD players (and faceplates), amps, speakers (even when bolted down!)
- Jewelry, keys, mail (identity theft), tools
- Anything of obvious value

Another crime of opportunity that increases this time of year is vehicle thefts. On these cold winter mornings it is so tempting to go out and start the car. The car gets nice and toasty as you sit in the kitchen sipping coffee. But don't be surprised when you walk outside and your car is not where you left it. A car idling in the parking lot or driveway is just too tempting a target for a thief looking for an easy opportunity. Even though you may have locked the car with your spare key, or used the remote key lock; it only takes seconds for a thief to get into the vehicle and drive away. Also, keep in mind that in West Valley City it is illegal to leave a vehicle running while unattended 22-2-112. This can be a hard one because nobody likes to sit in that cold car, or scrape the ice off of the window. But don't make the mistake of saying, "it won't happen to me.", or "I was only inside for a minute." These are the same thoughts the last victim had as he was calling the police to report his vehicle as stolen.

By following these simple guidelines you will be reducing the OPPORTUNITY for theft and increasing your peace of mind as you enjoy this holiday season.







# HOME SAFETY THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

## Deck The House

Every year millions of people put up decorations all over their homes. The end result should be festive and light, but without taking a few important precautions, it can become a nightmare.

Strings of holiday lights are put up both inside and outside to brighten up any dwelling. Unfortunately, these same lights cause a large number of fires each year. Before putting them up, you should always check on the condition of the lights. Make sure the wiring is not frayed or damaged in any way, and that none of the bulbs are broken. A set of lights that is in bad shape can be very likely to short out and start a fire. The wires that cover every string of lights provide insulation and prohibit the electrical current from getting out. When the wires are not in prime condition, it's time to dispose of that set for another. Even a newer set of lights can be a hazard, so it is never a good idea to leave them unattended. When you go out for the night or go to sleep, make sure to turn them off.

A tree makes a magnificent centerpiece for holiday decorations, but it can also be a major hazard. Every year hundreds of fires begin in festively decorated trees. There are a few things you can do to make the tree as safe as possible. First off, mount the tree securely so it can not tip over or be easily knocked down. A falling tree can land on someone or damage property. A dry tree can ignite far too easily. It is essential to keep the tree well watered the entire time you have it in your home - especially if you plan to place candles on or near it. Place the tree far away from the fireplace if you intend to use it, and the same goes for wrapping paper, gifts or any other holiday items that may be flammable.

Just in case there is a fire, make sure you have a charged extinguisher around the house. Let everyone who lives there know exactly where it is, and show them how to use it. Check the batteries in any smoke alarms you have in your home to be certain they are in good working condition. An alarm will immediately alert you about a dangerous situation, and will let you know to grab the fire extinguisher. One final note - holiday decorations are often used all over the house, but they should never block any exits. In case a fire does break out, you'll want to have every possible escape route free and clear.

## Holiday Gatherings

Having friends and family over for the holidays can be a fun and joyous experience, but you still must be cautious and alert. A dinner party is a great way to entertain your guests, but don't neglect the food you have cooking. Another major household fire hazard is food that is placed on the stove and forgotten about. The table settings at these meals tend to be lavish, but if they include candles you may want to remove them when it's time to eat, especially if there are young children involved. All it takes is a quick bump to knock one over and catch the tablecloth on fire.

Keeping your home safe from fire is only part of the responsibilities home owners face during the holiday season. Read on to find out more about protecting your house from criminals who would take advantage of this season of giving.

This article is from [www.crimepreventiontips.org](http://www.crimepreventiontips.org), 11-25-09.







# TIPS

With Thanks From:  
McBull the Crime Dog®



## Holiday Time

- **Do as much shopping as possible in advance of the crowds. You will be less hassled and more alert to your surroundings - and you will get a better selection.**
- **Put parcels in the trunk of your car if you are driving. Do not leave prospective presents in plain view.**
- **Be sure to lock all doors and secure the home (including that garage door), even if you are only running to the store or visiting a neighbor "for just a minute or two." That is all the time a burglar needs, in many cases.**
- **Leave lights on timers and window shades or blinds in normal positions if you are going away, even just overnight.**
- **Keep presents out of view. The gaily wrapped packages are a beacon to burglars if they are on display near a window.**
- **Do not drink to excess. Not only does it increase your chance of being in a car crash but also it increases the odds that you might wind up a victim of crime.**



**WEST VALLEY CITY**

Unity Pride Progress

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